



Draft Alternatives

Dear Friends,

First, I want to express my sincere appreciation for your dedication to and interest in the future of Biscayne National Park! We began the process of developing a new General Management Plan (GMP) close to 3 years ago and your involvement has helped us assemble the wide range of draft alternatives that are now available for your consideration. We know that Biscayne National Park is part of your lives and adds to the quality of life in South Florida, and we, like you, want to keep it that way. The General Management Plan will set the direction for the next 15-20 years.

Two years ago, we began the process of developing the park's first Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) to guide management decisions related to fish and fishing for the next 5 - 10 years. We are working with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission on a plan that will address the status of fish populations in the park, describe desired conditions of fisheries and fish habitat, and detail ways to reach or maintain those conditions.

The distinctions between the two plans are important. The GMP describes desired resource conditions and visitor experiences throughout the park. It is the park's overall guiding roadmap. The FMP is an action plan to achieve a portion of the park's mission. It describes desired conditions of fish populations and habitat, experiences of people fishing in the park, and outlines specific management actions that may be taken to achieve them.

Now, for the task ahead of us. The GMP planning team has devoted many hours considering your suggestions and creating different management zones. Each zone is a different option for managing the same section of the park. We have assembled these zones in a variety of configurations and locations throughout the park to create a range of alternatives. There are five alternatives. One alternative is how the park is managed now and provides a basis for comparing other alternatives. The other four alternatives represent scenarios that provide a range of resource conditions and ways for people to experience the park.

Some alternatives include all the proposed management zones and others do not. We cannot include every possible option, so these alternatives are just a starting point. We want to know what you think about the alternatives, specifically what you like, what you do not like, and any specific changes you would like to see. Please let us know if there are ideas we have not included that you want us to include or if there are places where you think a particular management zone would work well.

There is a lot of information in this newsletter. The GMP planning team included a summary matrix to provide general information on the different management zones. The matrix is only a summary. Please refer to the detailed text for a more complete description.

We want to hear from you! You may give us your comments several ways.

For the General Management Plan, fill out the enclosed response form and mail it back. You may also submit comments via email to <biscayne_gmp_planning@nps.gov>.

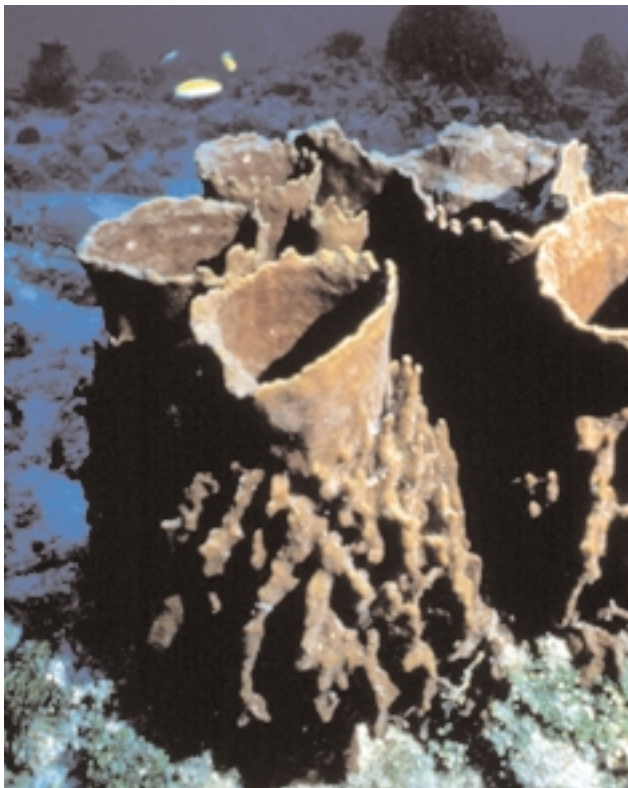
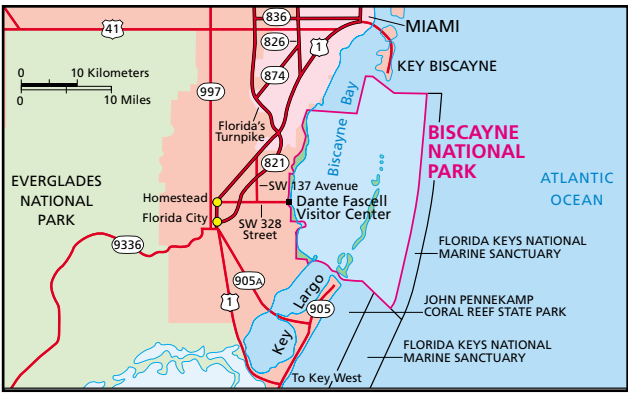
To talk with us personally about the GMP and FMP, you may attend a public meeting. The meetings will be held on the dates and times listed on the lower right of this page.

All comments must be received by February 6th, 2004.

Again, thank you for your time and involvement in these very important planning processes! Together, we will ensure that Biscayne National Park will be an important and treasured place for future generations.

Thank you,

Linda Canzanelli
Superintendent



You're Invited. . .

We welcome your comments and hope to see you at one of the public meetings listed below:

Dec. 2, 2003

Westin Beach Resort
97000 Overseas Highway
Key Largo, FL 33037
3:00PM - 7:30PM

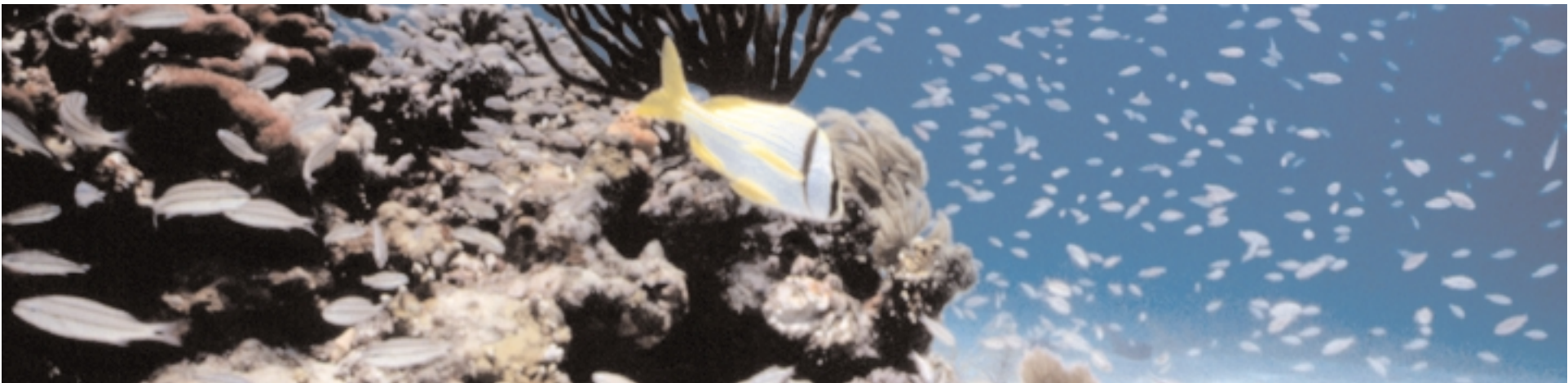
Dec. 3, 2003

Crowne Plaza Hotel - Miami International Airport
950 NW LeJuene Road
Miami, FL 33126
3:00PM - 7:30PM

Dec. 4, 2003

Homestead Family YMCA
1034 NE 8th Street
Homestead, FL 33030
3:00PM - 7:30PM

Assistance for individuals with special needs can be arranged by calling 305- 230- 1144 ext. 3002 at least four days prior to the meeting.



THE PLANNING PROCESS

Several factors contributed to the need to develop a new General Management Plan for Biscayne National Park. The existing plan was completed in 1983 and does not adequately address current and projected conditions in the park or the surrounding area. Chief among these conditions is the large and growing population of South Florida. We also heard from you that learning about and being able to access the park are important activities for residents and visitors. At the same time, we heard that, even now, your favorite spot is occasionally occupied by the time you get there, and popular areas of the park feel crowded. Imagine what the park will be like in 20 years if our management strategies do not consider needs and desires of the current and projected population.

Planning for the park has involved three primary questions: **WHY** was Biscayne National Park established (what

were the significant aspects of the area that congress considered worthy of national park status, and what was the park’s purpose conveyed in the legislation)? **WHAT** is the vision for the future (within that purpose, what kind of place do we want the park to be in the next 15- 20 years and beyond)? And **HOW** do we accomplish our future vision (what actions should we take to craft this desired future)?

Biscayne’s purpose and significance statements provide answers to the **WHY** question and provide a starting point for the *General Management Plan*. Developing a vision for the park’s future is the primary function of the general management plan and answers the **WHAT** question. The **HOW** questions are answered in separate action plans that tier from the general management plan and are developed as part of seperate public processes.

In the beginning of the planning process for the general management plan, the National Park Service (NPS) asked what you value most about Biscayne National Park. Through our first newsletter and five public meetings, we also requested your thoughts on how you envision the park in the future and what you see as obstacles for achieving that vision. We considered your verbal and written comments and summarized them in our second newsletter.

Your ideas have been instrumental in helping us identify issues and develop potential visions for the park’s future. Based on the park’s goals, your input, and consultation with other government agencies, the planning team developed eight management zones that will provide the foundation for decision- making in the park and form the core of the general management plan.

PARK PURPOSE

As stated in Public Law 90- 606 – October 18, 1968, Biscayne National Park was established

“to preserve and protect for the education, inspiration, recreation and enjoyment of present and future generations a rare combination of terrestrial, marine, and amphibious life in a tropical setting of great natural beauty....”

MANAGEMENT ZONES

Management zones describe how areas of the park could be managed to achieve a variety of resource conditions and visitor experiences. The description for each management zone is made up of three elements: what a resource will look like over time; the variety of experiences visitors will be able to enjoy within the park; and the management activities and facilities that would be appropriate given the desired resource conditions and visitor experiences.

When a set of resource conditions, visitor experiences and management activities are packaged together, we refer to that combination as a management zone. Eight management zones are described in this newsletter (see insert). Draft alternatives have been developed by arranging the management zones in different configurations throughout the park.

DRAFT ALTERNATIVES

Five draft alternatives are described in this newsletter. Each alternative has a concept statement that broadly describes the guiding philosophy or overall direction for that alternative. After the concept statement there are general descriptions of the management directions and actions that would be taken in the various management zones for natural and cultural resources, visitor experiences, and facilities.

Alternative 1 is a “no- action” alternative that describes current management and serves as a baseline for comparing the other alternatives. The four “action” alternatives (2- 5) have maps showing the locations where different management zones would be applied throughout the park.

While considering the alternatives presented here, please keep in mind that these represent visions of the future park. The alternatives are conceptual in nature, focusing

on *what* resource conditions and visitor experiences should be in the park rather than details on *how* they should be achieved. The details on *how* would be developed in future action plans. For example, specific techniques for managing fish populations would be found in the fisheries management plan that is underway, details of how the Stiltsville structures will be managed have been determined in a planning document for that area, and more detailed aspects of providing orientation and information will be described in the long- range interpretive plan.

A second point to keep in mind is that the NPS has identified Alternative 4 as its preliminary preferred alternative. A final preferred alternative will be developed once we have considered your comments on these five alternatives. The preferred alternative may be one of the alternatives shown in this newsletter or it may be a new alternative

that includes elements from several of the alternatives or includes ideas we have not shown.

With your input, the planning team will continue to refine the alternatives and management zones. The planning team will evaluate all the alternatives and compare and contrast the advantages and disadvantages of one over another. This evaluation is required by the National Environmental Policy Act and provides valuable information to consider in making the final decision about the park’s future.

Please review the management zones and draft alternatives and let us know what you like or dislike. We also need to know if there is anything we have missed so we can explore the widest possible range of options.

Alternative 1

Alternative 1 is the no- action alternative and describes a continuation of current management and trends. This alternative serves as a basis of comparison with the other alternatives. The park would continue to be managed according to the park’s enabling legislation, NPS policies, and the guidance in the 1983 *General Management Plan*. Management activities would continue to conserve natural resources and processes while accommodating a wide range of visitor uses and experiences. Cultural resources and their settings would continue to be managed for preservation, protection, and education.

The built environment would remain at its current level at Convoy Point (adjacent to Homestead Bayfront County Park), Boca Chita, Elliott, and Adams Keys. Convoy Point would remain as the primary site for visitor orientation to the park and education about the resources. At Boca Chita Key the harbor and boat docking facilities, ornamental lighthouse, chapel, and picnicking, camping, and restroom facilities would remain. Facilities at Elliott Key would still include a dock, trails, picnicking and camping areas, restrooms, an environmental education center, and park staff housing. The dock, restrooms, picnic area, trail, and park staff housing would remain at Adams Key.

Navigation channels to and within the park would continue as they are currently. Periodic dredging of these channels by agencies responsible for their upkeep would continue. Channel depths would remain at their current levels, and no new dredging would occur. Naturally occur-

ring channels would continue to be marked and would not be dredged.

A high level of interaction would continue among visitors, park staff, and park resources. Concessions operations would continue to provide limited tours into the park, rental equipment for recreational activities and a store with food, souvenirs, and supplies. Commercial harvesting of marine resources would continue. The state would continue to regulate species, fishing methods, seasons, and catch limits.

Visitors would continue to access the entire park except privately owned keys and areas closed for protection of sensitive resources. Arsenicker Key, West Arsenicker Key, and the Sandwich Cove Islands and surrounding waters would remain closed to visitors for protection of bird rookeries. Seasonal closures would continue on the keys to protect nesting turtles and birds. Boaters could continue to traverse the Legare Anchorage that protects the historic H.M.S. *Fowey* shipwreck but would not be allowed to stop or dive. Part of Sands Key and all of Soldier Key and immediately surrounding waters would continue to be closed to visitors to protect cultural resources and sensitive wildlife species.

A no- wake zone would remain along part of the mainland coast for manatee protection. For visitor safety and seagrass protection, a slow- speed, minimum wake zone would continue from Coon Point on the bayside of Elliott

Key to the southwestern point of Sands Key, and north across Sands Cut from Elliott Key, an area prone to boat congestion.



Alternative 2

Alternative 2 would emphasize the recreational use of the park while providing for resource protection as governed by law, policy, or resource sensitivity. This concept would be accomplished by providing a high level of services, facilities, and access to specific areas of the park. Visitors would be able to access the entire park except small areas set aside for the protection of sensitive resources. Moderate resource impacts might be tolerated in high use areas. Substantial concession services would enable visitor access, and partnerships for access and visitor contact points outside the park would be sought. A significant built environment might be required, and some areas of the park might be developed beyond the current level. A high level of interaction among visitors, park staff, and park resources would be expected. Biscayne National Park would coordinate with Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary to ensure compatible management strategies in adjacent federal waters.

Visitor Services/Park Administration Zone. Convoy Point would remain the primary park administration and visitor service zone. If additional administrative space were needed, some of the functions accommodated here might be moved out of the park and into the local community. New visitor facilities at this location could include a platform for viewing the bay, a boardwalk along the mangrove shoreline north of the visitor center, and catwalks over canals.

This management zone would encompass all of Boca Chita Key. Historic structures on the key would be reused for park operations and visitor services. Docks would be developed on the ocean side of the key and along the historic wall on the west side of the key. The retaining wall on the north side of the island would be strengthened to maintain its current configuration. Mooring buoys around the key would accommodate additional boats.

On Elliott Key the harbor area would be included in this management zone. The current hiking trail, which goes north from the harbor area to the Sweeting Homestead, would be improved and maintained as necessary for visitors with mobility challenges. A connecting trail to University Dock would be built. Primitive campsites would be established at Sandwich Cove, Petrel Point and Niedhawk Homestead. Composting toilets and visitor kiosks would be installed. The establishment of a food concession, either in a structure on the island or on a vessel, would be explored. Current visitor services and park administration facilities would continue to be used, but the specific uses of these facilities could change to improve efficiency.

All of Adams Key would be included in this management zone. Existing facilities and uses would continue with improved visitor services. A staging area for canoes and kayaks would be developed, allowing visitors to be shuttled to Adams Key on a motorboat and depart from the key in a canoe or kayak to explore areas such as Jones Lagoon. Most likely a commercial operator would provide canoe and kayak service. Other potential visitor facilities include primitive campgrounds, improved trails, and improvements to the dock. Instituting a no-wake zone would be considered, and establishing a general store would be explored.

Porgy Key would be in the visitor services/park administration zone. At the homesite on Porgy Key visitors could see and learn about the historic uses of the keys before the park’s creation. The old dock would be improved and

extended to facilitate vessel access to the key. The ruins would be stabilized and maintained. The key would be considered as a site for commercial operations, such as canoe rentals for forays into Jones Lagoon.

In this alternative, the National Park Service would pursue becoming the managing agency for the Fowey Lighthouse, which is currently managed by the U.S. Coast Guard. As a historic structure, the lighthouse would be used for interpretive purposes.

Mooring buoys would be established to make it more convenient for snorkelers and divers to see shallow coral reef resources at various locations along the reef tract.

Through partnership agreements, visitor contact facilities would be established outside the park boundary at sites such as marinas and state and county parks. Kiosks and interpretive signs at Black Point County Park, Homestead Bayfront County Park, Mattheson Hammock County Park and Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park would be installed or improved with new kiosks, signs, and interpretive programs. Other potential sites to explore could include Dinner Key (in Coconut Grove), No Name Harbor (in Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park), Crandon Park (on Key Biscayne), Deering Estate (in Cutler Ridge), Ocean Reef and Alabama Jacks (north of Key Largo.). Some sites could include education programs and NPS personnel. Establishing a dock for canoe access and storage on Old Cutler Road north of the park boundary would be pursued.

Dredged Navigation Channels Zone: The Intracoastal Waterway and Homestead Bayfront, Black Point and Turkey Point channels would continue as transportation channels to and within the park. The channels would remain at their current depths, configuration and alignment and would continue to be maintained by agencies responsible for their upkeep. The dredged navigation channels zone would be managed for resource protection and safe travel within the park.

Multiuse Zone: This management zone would be applied to most of the park (both water and lands) with the objective of providing visitors opportunities to recreate and learn about the park and its resources and minimizing resource impacts from visitor use.

Both recreational and commercial fishing would continue to occur in this zone, and Biscayne National Park would continue monitoring fish populations. If monitoring revealed unacceptable levels of decline or damage, appropriate management actions would be taken that might include limitations on fishing methods, establishing minimum and/or maximum harvest sizes, and/or a permit system. All actions concerning fishing in the park would be implemented in accordance with the Fisheries Management Plan and after consulting with the State of Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

Water-based areas would include all water areas not included in the dredged navigation channels or noncombustion engine use, nature observation, sensitive underwater archeological, or sensitive resource zone. Land-based areas would include the shoreline from Homestead Bayfront County Park to Black Point County Park and Elliott Key (except the harbor and trail).

Noncombustion Engine Use Zone: The emphasis of this management zone would be to preserve natural sounds

and to protect shallow-water habitats (generally 3 feet and less in depth), and wildlife such as manatee and bonefish that use this area. Four shallow-water areas of the park would be included. Boats with combustion engines could enter the areas, but use of the engines would be prohibited. Boaters would be required to use other means to propel their boats, such as electric engines, oars, paddles, poles, or sails.

One area in the noncombustion engine use zone would follow the shoreline between Convoy Point to the northern park boundary and extend east approximately 1,000 feet from the mainland (3’ deep). A second area would be in the southwest portion of the park between Midnight Pass and Turkey Point Power Plant and would extend east from the shoreline to include the waters around Mangrove Key (3’ deep). The third area would be east of the Intracoastal Waterway north of Broad Creek and would include Jones Lagoon and the waters around Totten and Old Rhodes Keys (1’ deep). The fourth area would be in the Bay due west of Boca Chita Key and include Featherbed Bank and East Featherbed (3’ deep). The size and shape of this latter area would be delineated by existing and new markers.

Nature Observation Zone: Areas of the park in this management zone would include the mainland from just north of Black Point County Park to the northern park boundary; park land between Homestead Bayfront County Park and the Turkey Point Power Plant; and the mangrove shoreline in the southwest corner of the park. The objective would be to preserve natural and cultural resources while allowing visitors to be immersed in nature.

Several keys would also be included in the nature observation zone – Sands Key, Soldier Key, the Ragged Keys, Rubicon Keys, Reid Key, Old Rhodes Key, Totten Key, Gold Key, Swan Key, East Arsenicker, Long Arsenicker, and Mangrove Key. Limited use of the keys and mainland areas would continue. Development would not occur, and the keys would be managed to avoid intensive visitor use.

Sensitive Underwater Archeological Zone: The Legare Anchorage would be reduced to about 1 square mile and included in this management zone primarily to continue protecting underwater cultural resources. To facilitate protection and make it easier for boaters to identify, the area would be delineated by latitude and longitude lines. Travel through the area in a vessel would be allowed, but mooring, anchoring, and entering the water would not. Visitors could see resources only from the water’s surface and from viewing platforms such as the concessioner’s glass-bottom boat. Recreational hook and line fishing would be allowed. This area could be used for permitted research activities.

Sensitive Resource Zone: West Arsenicker and Arsenicker Keys and the water extending out 500 feet from these land areas would be included in the sensitive resource management zone to provide protection for exceptional and critical resources by prohibiting visitor access. Research could occur under a permit if the knowledge could not be gained from other areas. Proposed inclusions in this area would protect habitat for reptiles, bird rookeries and nesting areas (for species such as herons, egrets, pelicans, and cormorants), sensitive Native American Indian sites, and locations where endangered species are known.

Alternative 3

Alternative 3 would use a permit system to authorize a limited number of visitors to access some areas of the park while allowing all visitors a full range of visitor experiences throughout most of the park. Management actions would provide strong natural and cultural resource protection and diverse visitor experiences. Some park areas would have limited access to provide an uncrowded experience, and small areas would be set aside that prohibit visitor access in order to protect sensitive resources and to allow wildlife a respite from people.

Visitor opportunities in this alternative would range from the challenges of exploring the natural environment alone to the conveniences of built surroundings. A high level of interaction among visitors, park staff, and park resources would be expected. Orientation to the park would help

visitors choose types and locations of activities and learn about resource preservation and stewardship. Minor impacts on resources might be tolerated in high-use areas of the park. Biscayne National Park would coordinate with Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary to ensure compatible management strategies in adjacent federal waters.

The management zones for alternatives 2 and 3 would be identical except for the following:

Visitor Services/Park Administration Zone: The primitive campsites mentioned in alternative 2 would not be developed in alternative 3.

Access by Permit Zone: The access by permit zone would provide visitors with relative solitude by using a permit system to limit the number of people who could be in the area at a time. Areas of the park in this zone currently receive little visitation and would provide places of low-density use as the population of South Florida increases. The first of these four areas would include the southwestern waters in the park, west of the Intracoastal Waterway from the park boundary on the south to latitude 25° 25' on the north. The second area would encompass a roughly triangular area of the bay north of the Black Point Channel, including Black Ledge. The third area would be Soldier Key and the waters within 500 feet of Soldier Key. The fourth area would encompass the bayside waters along the southern shore of Elliott Key from Sandwich Cove to Ott Point.





Alternative 4- Preliminary Preferred Alternative

Alternative 4 would emphasize strong natural and cultural resource protection while providing a diversity of visitor experiences. Visitor opportunities in this alternative would range from the challenges of exploring the natural environment alone to the conveniences of built surroundings. A limited amount of resource impacts might be tolerated in high- use areas of the park. Some areas might be closed to visitors to protect sensitive resources and allow wildlife a respite from people. The park’s boundary would be expanded to the east to be the same as that of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. This area would be jointly managed by the federal agencies.

Visitor Services/Park Administration Zone: This management zone would include the most concentrated developed portions of the park. At Convoy Point the park headquarters and visitor center would be included. The northern portion of Boca Chita Key, including the day use area, campground, and boat basin would be included. At Elliott Key the harbor, dock, campground, restrooms, environmental education center, ranger station, and park staff housing would be included; however, the specific uses of these facilities could change. The southern portion of Adams Key that includes the dock, day use/park administration area, pavilion, restrooms, and two ranger residences would be part of this management area. Also, a new staging area for canoes and kayaks would be provided, allowing visitors to be shuttled by motorboat to the key and depart from there by canoe or kayak to explore the park. This new service likely would be provided by a commercial operator. On the northern end of Porgy Key, ruins from the old homesite would be stabilized, maintained, and interpreted. Access to the site would be improved.

Dredged Navigation Channels Zone: This zone would be the same as described in alternative 2.

Multiuse Zone: This management zone would encompass most of the park’s water areas. Land areas would include most of Elliott Key, portions of Boca Chita Key, Adams Key, Porgy Key, and a shore area directly south of Homestead Bayfront County Park. The objective would be to provide visitors a full range of recreational opportunities. Fishing would continue to occur and fish populations would be monitored. If unacceptable levels of change occurred, appropriate management actions would be taken in consultation with the Florida State Fish and Wildlife Commission.

Noncombustion Engine Use Zone: Four water areas would be included in this management zone to preserve natural sounds and to protect shallow- water habitats (generally 3 feet and less in depth), and wildlife such as manatee and bonefish that use this area. Boaters would be required to use noncombustion propulsion within these areas, such as electric engines, oars, poles, or sails. The first area would extend east from the shoreline for 1,000 feet between Convoy Point to the northern park boundary (generally 3’ deep). The second area would be in the southwest portion of the park surrounding the Arsenicker islands (generally 3’ deep). The third area would be east of the Intracoastal Waterway and include the waters around the southern keys in the park (generally 1’ deep). The fourth area would be in the Bay due west of Boca Chita Key and include Featherbed Bank and East Featherbed (generally 3’ deep).

Access by Permit Zone: Access would be by permit only to Soldier Key and surrounding waters extending 500 feet out.

Nature Observation Zone: Most of the shore area, most of the smaller keys, and a section of the reef would be in this management zone. These areas would be managed to provide visitors with opportunities to experience marine ecosystems in their natural self- sustaining states. Visitors would participate in mostly self- directed and appropriate low- impact recreational activities.

The mangrove shoreline would be managed to protect crocodile and fish nursery habitat. The Ragged Keys, part of Sands Key, Rubicon Keys, Old Rhodes Key, Swan Key, Gold Key, Reid Key, part of Totten Key, Mangrove Key, Long Arsenicker Key, East Arsenicker Key and several smaller unnamed keys would be managed to avoid intensive visitor use. The reef area south of marker 17 would be included. This area covering approximately 12,694 acres spans from the park boundary on the east to Hawk Channel on the west. Fishing would be permitted.

Sensitive Underwater Archeological Zone: This zone would be the same as described in alternative 2.

Sensitive Resource Zone: West Arsenicker Key, Arsenicker Key, Sandwich Cove Islands, most of Totten Key and the southern half of Sands Key would be in this management zone. These keys provide important habitat for birds and reptiles and contain sensitive cultural resources. Visitors would not be allowed in these areas. Research could occur under a permit if the knowledge could not be gained from another area.

Alternative 5

In Alternative 5, the park would be managed to promote the protection of natural resources, including taking actions to optimize conditions for recovery. Natural processes would prevail except when management actions were needed to preserve and protect significant cultural resources. Visitor access and activities would be highly managed for resource protection while still enabling visitors to participate in a variety of activities. To accomplish this variety, a permit system would be used in some parts of the park. Other areas would have limited numbers of visitors, manner of access, and recreational activities to provide certain experiences. Some areas would be closed to visitors to protect sensitive resources and provide wildlife a respite from people. The built environment would be limited to basic visitor safety and services and would be geographically concentrated or outside park boundaries. The park’s boundary would be expanded to the east to be the same as that of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. This area would be jointly managed by the federal agencies.

Visitor Services/Park Administration Zone: This management zone would include the most concentrated developed portions of the park. Only previously disturbed lands would be in this zone. At Convoy Point the park headquarters and visitor center would be included. The northern portion of Boca Chita Key, including the day use area, campground, and boat basin, would be included. There would be no new construction. Some historic structures would be used for park operations and expanded visitor services. At Elliott Key the harbor, dock, campground, restrooms, environmental education center, ranger station, and NPS housing would be included; however, the uses of these facilities could change. The southern portion of Adams Key that includes the dock, day use/park administration area, pavilion, restrooms, and two ranger residences would be part of this management zone.

Dredged Navigation Channels Zone: This zone would be the same as described in alternative 2.

Multiuse Zone: This management zone encompasses most of the park’s water area and two small land areas – the northern portion of Adams Key and the southern half of Boca Chita Key. The objective would be to provide visitors a full range of recreational opportunities. Fishing would continue to occur, and fish populations would be monitored. If unacceptable levels of change occurred, appropriate management actions would be taken in

accordance with the Fisheries Management Plan and in consultation with the State of Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

Noncombustion Engine Use Zone: Six shallow- water areas would be included in this management zone to preserve natural sounds and to protect shallow- water habitats (generally 3 feet and less in depth), and wildlife such as manatee and bonefish that use this area. Boaters would be required to use noncombustion propulsion within these areas, such as electric engines, oars, poles, or sails and would be permitted to use combustion engines at idle speeds in depths greater than 3’. The first area, in the northwest corner of the park, would extend east about three- quarters to 2 nautical miles from the mainland shoreline into Biscayne Bay and north from the end markers of Convoy Point and Black Point Channels to the park boundary (5’ deep).This area would also protect manatees.

The second area would be in the southwest corner and surround the Arsenicker islands (3’ deep). The third area would be east of the Intracoastal Waterway and include the waters around the southern keys, including Old Rhodes Key and Jones Lagoon (generally 1’ deep). The fourth area would follow the shore of Elliott Key (generally 0 to 6 feet deep), beginning south of Ott Point and wrapping around the sound end and east side of the key ending at Sands Cut. The fifth area would be east of the Intracoastal Waterway and include Featherbed Bank and East Featherbed (generally 3’ deep). The sixth area would include the Safety Valve, beginning at Boca Chita Key north to the park boundary but not including Stiltsville and Biscayne Channel (5’ deep). Use of combustion engines at idle speeds in depths greater than 3’ would be permitted.

Access by Permit Zone: To ensure an uncrowded environment in which visitors could experience a full range of recreational opportunities, access would be by permit only to an area of the bay north of the Black Point Channel to the park boundary.

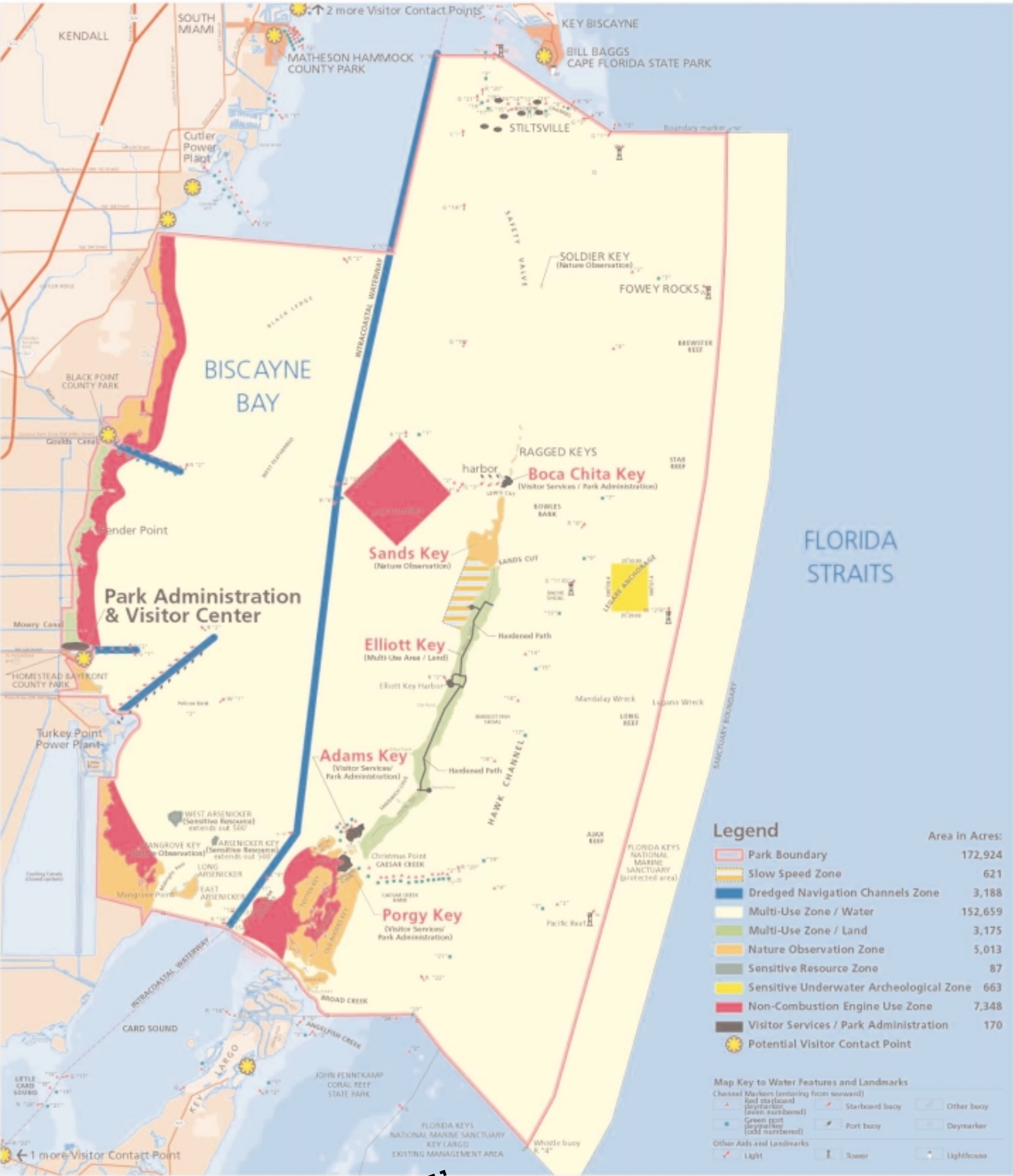
Nature Observation Zone: Most of the park’s mainland area, most of the keys, and a section of the coral reef would be managed as nature observation zones. These areas would be managed to provide visitors with opportunities to experience marine ecosystems in their natural self- sustaining states, including coral reefs with fully functioning interdependent communities of organisms.

The mainland area is predominantly mangrove swamp, receives little visitor use, and would be managed to help protect crocodile habitat and fish nurseries. The keys would be managed to avoid intensive visitor use. Elliott Key (not including the harbor area development), Old Rhodes Key, Reid Key, Porgy Key, Rubicon Keys, East and Long Arsenickers, the Ragged Keys, and other small keys would be included. About 20,012 acres of the coral reef and adjacent habitat between Hawk Channel and the eastern boundary, including Ajax and Long Reefs, would be in the nature observation zone. Fishing would be permitted.

Sensitive Underwater Archeological Zone: This zone would be the same as described in alternative 2.

Sensitive Resource Zone: Soldier Key, Sands Key, Sandwich Cove Islands, about three- fourths of Totten Key, Swan Key, West Arsenicker Key, and Arsenicker Key would be included in the sensitive resource management zone to protect sensitive natural and cultural resources from human intervention. Visitors would not be allowed in these areas, but research could occur under a permit.



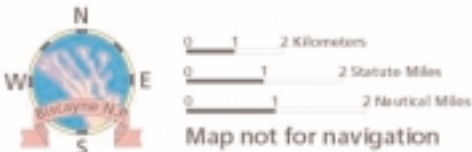
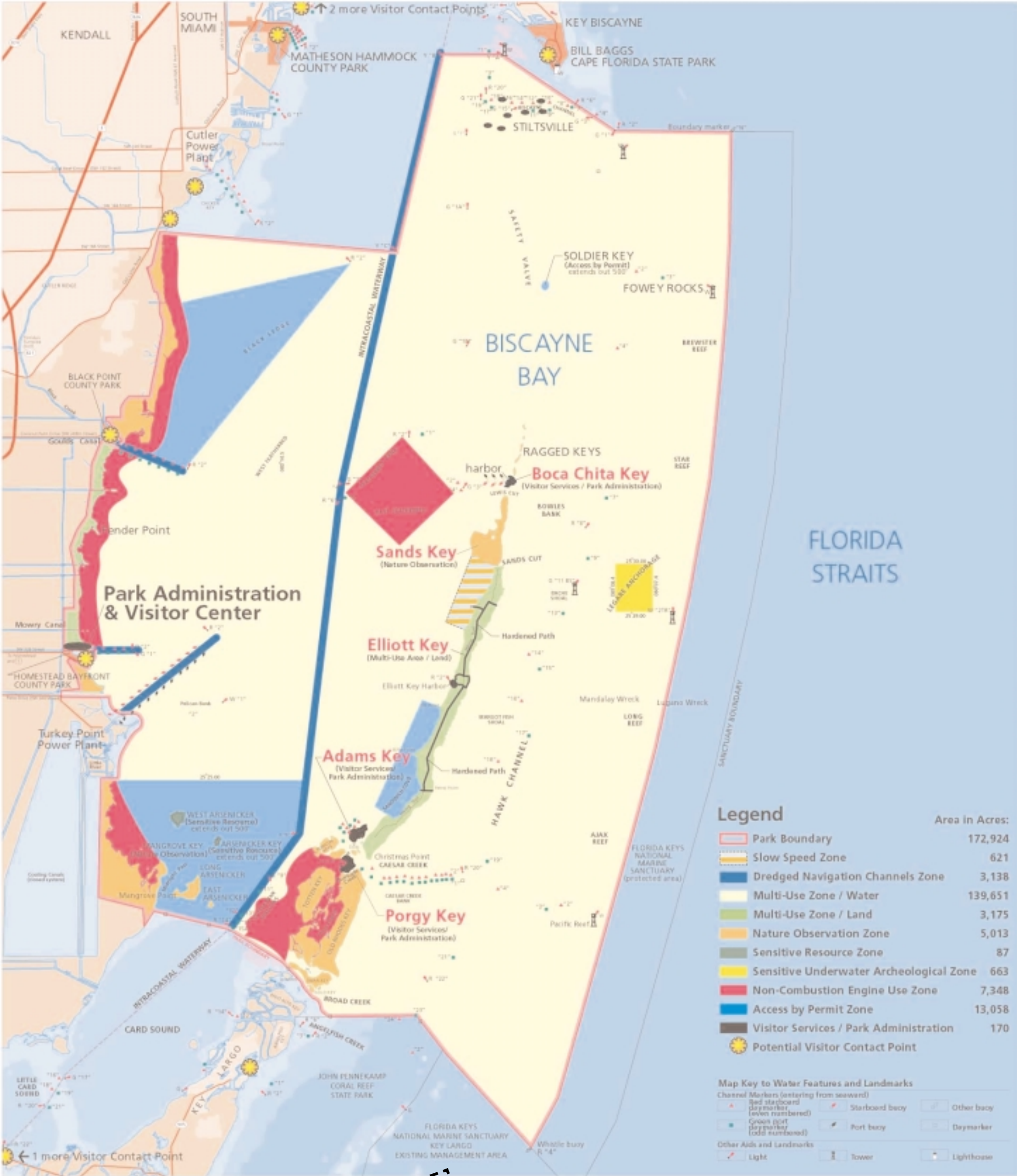


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Alternative 2

Biscayne National Park
United States Department of the Interior • National Park Service
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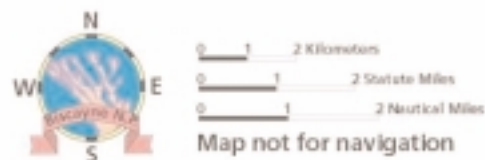
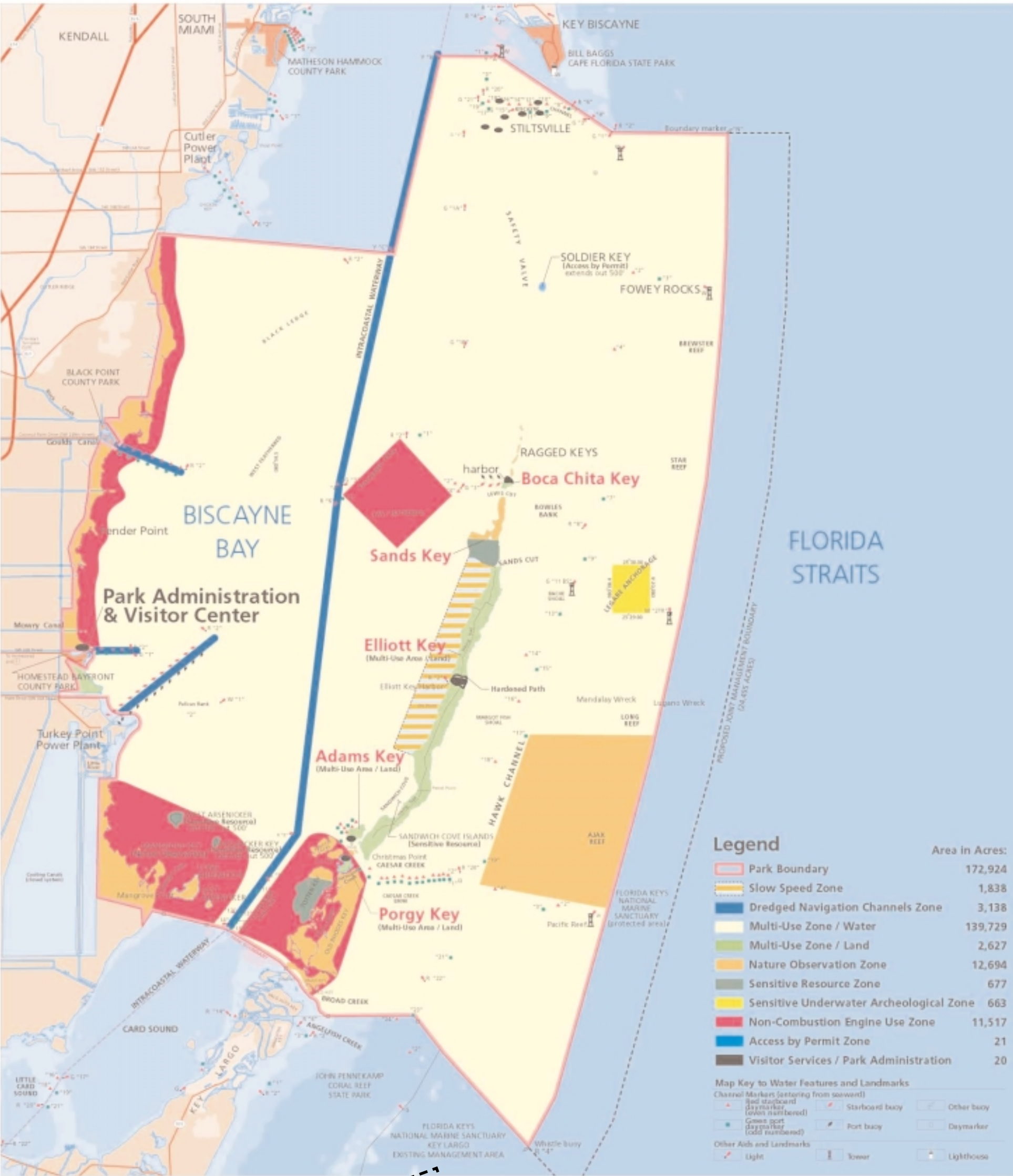


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United States Department of the Interior • National Park Service
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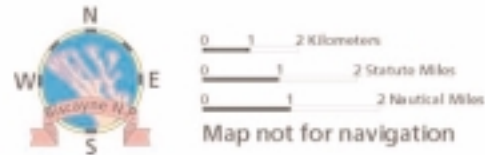
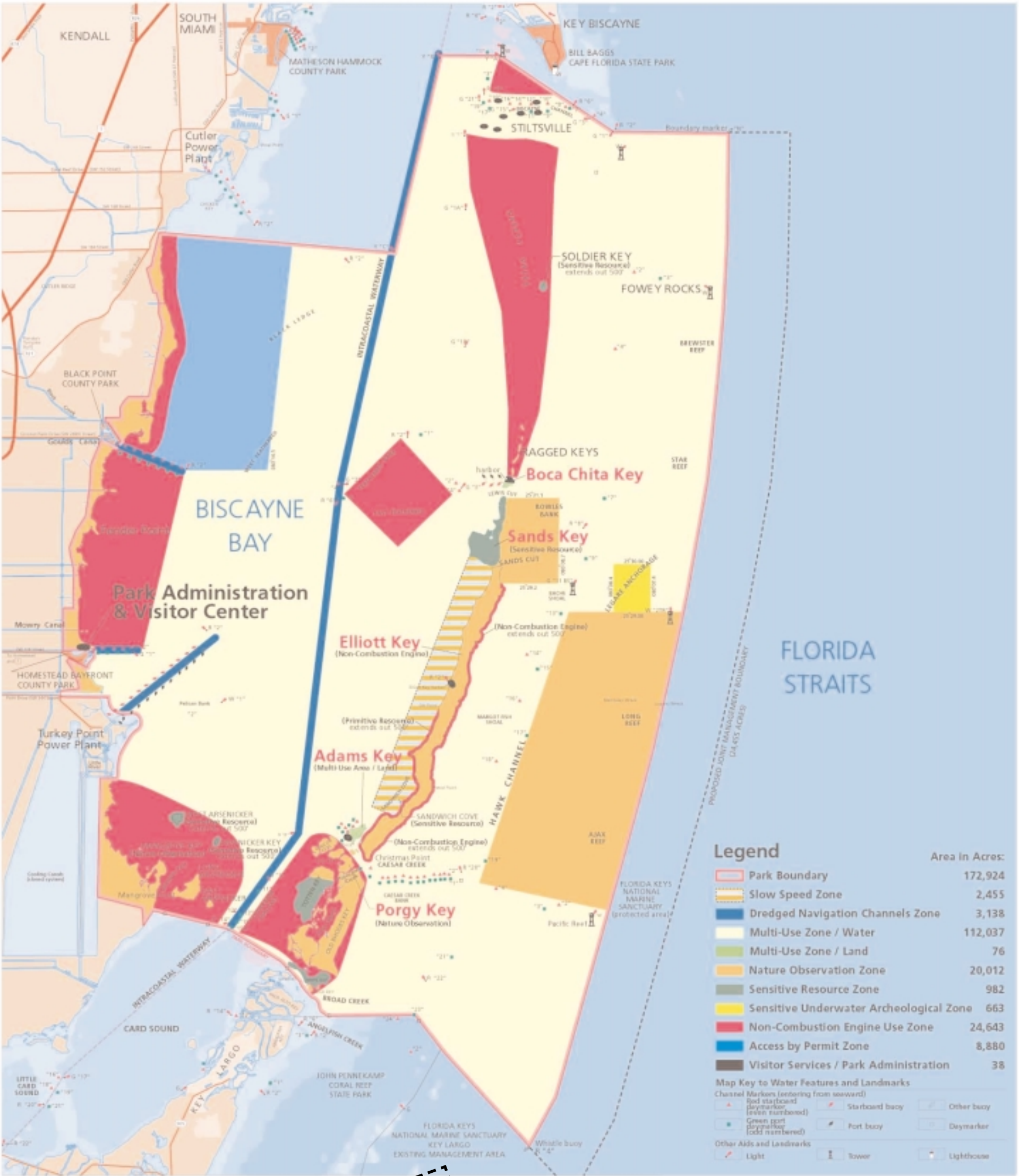


DRAFT

Alternative 4

Preliminary Preferred Alternative

Biscayne National Park
United States Department of the Interior • National Park Service
DSC / AUG.03 / XXX / XXXXX



DRAFT

Alternative 5

Biscayne National Park

United States Department of the Interior ■ National Park Service
DSC / AUG.03 / XXX / XXXXX

GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN SCHEDULE		
Step	Planning Activity	Public Involvement Opportunities
1	Set the stage for planning: Reaffirm purpose, significance, and mission of the park; determine issues and concerns.	Attend public meetings and voice your concerns using a response form.
where we are now	2 Develop preliminary management alternatives: Identify a range of reasonable alternatives for the park’s future, assess their effects, analyze public reactions, and select a preliminary preferred alternative.	Provide comments on the initial alternatives using a response form. Attend public meetings and provide comments.
3	Prepare and publish Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement: Prepare draft describing the planning, alternatives, and impacts; distribute to the public.	Provide written comments on the draft document. Attend public meetings and provide comments.
4	Revise and publish Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement: Analyze comments, prepare responses to comments, revise draft document, distribute to the public.	
5	Implement the approved plan: Prepare and issue Record of Decision and implement plan as funding allows.	Stay involved throughout the implementation of the approved plan.

Thank you for your interest in Biscayne National Park!